

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

TEMARCUS SCOTT,)
vs.)
Plaintiff,)
XAVIER BLACKBURN, et al.,)
vs.) CIVIL NO. 10-cv-70-DRH
Defendants.)

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

HERNDON, Chief Judge:

Plaintiff, a detainee at the St. Clair County Jail brings this action for deprivations of his constitutional rights pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983. This case is now before the Court for a preliminary review of the complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, which provides:

- (a) **Screening.**— The court shall review, before docketing, if feasible or, in any event, as soon as practicable after docketing, a complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity.
- (b) **Grounds for Dismissal.**— On review, the court shall identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint, or any portion of the complaint, if the complaint—
 - (1) is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted; or
 - (2) seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.

28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

An action or claim is frivolous if “it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.”

Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). An action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted if it does not plead “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 590 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). A complaint is plausible on its

face “when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1949 (2009). Although the Court is obligated to accept factual allegations as true, some factual allegations may be so sketchy or implausible that they fail to provide sufficient notice of a plaintiff’s claim. *Brooks v. Ross*, 578 F.3d 574, 581 (7th Cir. 2009). Additionally, Courts “should not accept as adequate abstract recitations of the elements of a cause of action or conclusory legal statements.” *Id.* At the same time, however, the factual allegations of a *pro se* complaint are to be liberally construed. *Rodriguez v. Plymouth Ambulance Service*, 577 F.3d 816, 821 (7th Cir. 2009).

THE COMPLAINT

Plaintiff alleges that on or about January 7, 2010, he was beaten by Defendants Collins, McPeak, Blackburn, and Clayton each of whom is a corrections officer at the St. Clair County Jail. The beating included being stomped on, having his head slammed into a wall, being slammed on to the ground, and (while handcuffed) having his head put into a toilet containing feces. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants Tim and Sims merely looked on and did not intervene to stop the beating. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendants McLaurin (Superintendent at the Jail), Justus (St. Clair County Sheriff), Scott (Assistant Superintendent), and Ray (Corrections Supervisor) knew that Collins, McPeak, Blackburn, and Clayton had a history of violence yet failed to adequately supervise and control them.

Plaintiff has divided the allegations of the complaint into three counts and the Court finds it convenient to utilize Plaintiff’s designations. The parties and the Court will use these designations in all future pleadings and orders, unless otherwise directed by a judicial officer of

this Court. The designation of these counts does not constitute an opinion as to their merit. The designations are:

COUNT 1: Against Defendants Collins, McPeak, Blackburn, and Clayton for using excessive force against him in violation of Plaintiff's right to Due Process of law under Fourteenth Amendment.

COUNT 2: Against Defendants Tim and Sims for failing to protect Plaintiff from the excessive use of force described in Count 1 in violation of Plaintiff's right to Due Process of law under the Fourteenth Amendment.

COUNT 3: Against Defendants McLaurin, Ray, Justus, Scott, and Ray for failing to protect Plaintiff from the excessive use of force described in Count 1 in violation of Plaintiff's right to Due Process of law under the Fourteenth Amendment.

DISCUSSION

Although claims brought pursuant to § 1983, when involving detainees, arise under the Fourteenth Amendment and not the Eighth Amendment, *see Weiss v. Cooley*, 230 F.3d 1027, 1032 (7th Cir. 2000), the Seventh Circuit has “found it convenient and entirely appropriate to apply the same standard to claims arising under the Fourteenth Amendment (detainees) and Eighth Amendment (convicted prisoners) without differentiation.” *Board v. Farnham*, 394 F.3d 469, 478 (7th Cir. 2005).

Under the Eighth Amendment, the intentional use of excessive force by prison guards against an inmate without penological justification constitutes cruel and unusual punishment and is actionable under § 1983. *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 6-7 (1992); *DeWalt v. Carter*, 224 F.3d 607, 619 (7th Cir. 2000). “[W]henever prison officials stand accused of using excessive physical force in violation of the Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause, the core judicial inquiry is . . . whether force was applied in a good-faith effort to maintain or restore discipline, or maliciously and sadistically to cause harm.” *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 6-7. An inmate seeking

damages for the use of excessive force need not establish serious bodily injury to make a claim, but not “every malevolent touch by a prison guard gives rise to a federal cause of action. . . . [the] prohibition of ‘cruel and unusual’ punishment necessarily excludes from constitutional recognition de minimis uses of physical force, provided that the use of force is not of a sort ‘repugnant to the conscience of mankind.’” *Id.* at 9-10; *see also Outlaw v. Newkirk*, 259 F.3d 833, 837-38 (7th Cir. 2001). Applying these principles, Plaintiff’s claims in Count 1 against Defendants Collins, McPeak, Blackburn, and Clayton survive review under § 1915A and should not be dismissed at this time.

Counts 2 and 3 of the complaint should also not be dismissed at this time. Liberally construed, these counts assert that the named Defendants subjected Plaintiff to dangerous conditions and/or failed to adequately protect him from an obvious harm. In order to prevail on such claims under the Eighth Amendment, a plaintiff must allege facts that, if true, would satisfy the objective and subjective components applicable to all Eighth Amendment claims. *See McNeil v. Lane*, 16 F.3d 123, 124 (7th Cir. 1994); *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 302 (1991). The objective component focuses on the nature of the acts or practices alleged to constitute cruel and unusual punishment. *See Jackson v. Duckworth*, 955 F.2d 21, 22 (7th Cir. 1992). The objective analysis examines whether the conditions of confinement “exceeded contemporary bounds of decency of a mature, civilized society.” *Lunsford v. Bennett*, 17 F.3d 1574, 1579 (7th Cir. 1994). The condition must result in unquestioned and serious deprivations of basic human needs or deprive inmates of the minimal civilized measure of life’s necessities. *Rhodes v. Chapman*, 452 U.S. 337, 347 (1981); *accord Jamison-Bey v. Thieret*, 867 F.2d 1046, 1048 (7th Cir. 1989); *Meriwether v. Faulkner*, 821 F.2d 408, 416 (7th Cir 1987).

In addition to showing objectively serious conditions, a plaintiff must also demonstrate the subjective component to an Eighth Amendment claim. The subjective component of unconstitutional punishment is the intent with which the acts or practices constituting the alleged punishment are inflicted. *Jackson*, 955 F.2d at 22. The subjective component requires a prison official had a sufficiently culpable state of mind. *See Wilson*, 501 U.S. at 298; *McNeil*, 16 F.3d at 124. In this case, the relevant state of mind is deliberate indifference to inmate or safety. The deliberate indifference standard is satisfied if the plaintiff shows that the prison official acted or failed to act despite the official's knowledge of a substantial risk of serious harm. *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 842 (1994). A failure of prison officials to act in such circumstances suggests that the officials actually want the prisoner to suffer the harm. *Jackson*, 955 F.2d at 22.

In Counts 2 and 3, Plaintiff alleges acts which are objectively dangerous - in Count 2 a beating by corrections officers which is in progress and in Count 3 guards who are have alleged predisposition to commit violence against detainees. Plaintiff alleges that the Defendants had actual knowledge of these dangers, they were in a position to intervene, but failed to take corrective actions. Accordingly, Counts 2 and 3 should not be dismissed at this time.

DISPOSITION

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Plaintiff shall complete and submit a USM-285 form for defendants **Blackburn, McPeak, Tim, McLaurin, Scott, Justus, Clayton, Sims, Collins, and Ray** within **THIRTY (30) DAYS** of the date of entry of this Memorandum and Order. The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to send Plaintiff **10** USM-285 forms with Plaintiff's copy of this Memorandum and Order. **Plaintiff is advised that service will not be made on a defendant until Plaintiff submits a properly completed USM-285 form for that defendant.**

The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to prepare Form 1A (Notice of Lawsuit and Request for Waiver of Service of Summons) and Form 1B (Waiver of Service of Summons) for Defendants **Blackburn, McPeak, Tim, McLaurin, Scott, Justus, Clayton, Sims, Collins, and Ray**. The Clerk shall forward those forms, USM-285 forms submitted by Plaintiff, and sufficient copies of the complaint to the United States Marshal for service.

The United States Marshal is **DIRECTED**, pursuant to Rule 4(c)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, to serve process on Defendants **Blackburn, McPeak, Tim, McLaurin, Scott, Justus, Clayton, Sims, Collins, and Ray** in the manner specified by Rule 4(d)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Process in this case shall consist of the complaint, applicable forms 1A and 1B, and this Memorandum and Order. For purposes of computing the passage of time under Rule 4(d)(2), the Court and all parties will compute time as of the date it is mailed by the Marshal, as noted on the USM-285 form.

With respect to former employees of the St. Clair County Jail who no longer can be found at the work address provided by Plaintiff, the Jail shall furnish the Marshal with the Defendant's last-known address upon issuance of a court order which states that the information shall be used only for purposes of effectuating service (or for proof of service, should a dispute arise) and any documentation of the address shall be retained only by the Marshal. Address information obtained from the Jail pursuant to this order shall not be maintained in the court file, nor disclosed by the Marshal.

The United States Marshal shall file returned waivers of service as well as any requests for waivers of service that are returned as undelivered as soon as they are received. If a waiver of service is not returned by a defendant within **THIRTY (30) DAYS** from the date of mailing

the request for waiver, the United States Marshal shall:

- Request that the Clerk prepare a summons for that defendant who has not yet returned a waiver of service; the Clerk shall then prepare such summons as requested.
- Personally serve process and a copy of this Order upon the defendant pursuant to Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and 28 U.S.C. § 566©.
- Within ten days after personal service is effected, the United States Marshal shall file the return of service for the defendant, along with evidence of any attempts to secure a waiver of service of process and of the costs subsequently incurred in effecting service on said defendant. Said costs shall be enumerated on the USM-285 form and shall include the costs incurred by the Marshal's office for photocopying additional copies of the summons and complaint and for preparing new USM-285 forms, if required. Costs of service will be taxed against the personally served defendant in accordance with the provisions of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(d)(2) unless the defendant shows good cause for such failure.

Plaintiff is **ORDERED** to serve upon defendant or, if appearance has been entered by counsel, upon that attorney, a copy of every further pleading or other document submitted for consideration by this Court. He shall include with the original paper to be filed with the Clerk of the Court a certificate stating the date that a true and correct copy of any document was mailed to defendant or his counsel. Any paper received by a district judge or magistrate judge which has not been filed with the Clerk or which fails to include a certificate of service will be disregarded by the Court.

Defendants are **ORDERED** to timely file an appropriate responsive pleading to the complaint, and shall not waive filing a reply pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(g).

Pursuant to Local Rule 72.1(a)(2), this cause is **REFERRED** to a United States Magistrate Judge for further pre-trial proceedings.

Further, this entire matter is hereby **REFERRED** to a United States Magistrate Judge for disposition, as contemplated by Local Rule 72.2(b)(2) and 28 U.S.C. § 636©, *should all the*

parties consent to such a referral.

Plaintiff is under a continuing obligation to keep the Clerk and each opposing party informed of any change in his whereabouts. This shall be done in writing and not later than seven (7) days after a transfer or other change in address occurs.

If Plaintiff does not comply with this Order, this case will be dismissed for failure to comply with an order of this Court. FED.R.CIV.P. 41(b); *see generally Ladien v. Astrachan*, 128 F.3d 1051 (7th Cir. 1997); *Johnson v. Kamminga*, 34 F.3d 466 (7th Cir. 1994).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: July 8, 2010

/s/ DavidRHerndon
DISTRICT JUDGE